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USIB-D-51.1/3  
29 January 1963

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, United States Intelligence Board

SUBJECT: Review of NIS Program - Interim Report

REFERENCES: a. USIB-D-51.1/1, 14 November 1962  
b. USIB-M-245, Paragraph 5, 21 November 1962

1. In accordance with Reference b, the Coordination Staff of the Director of Central Intelligence has undertaken an examination of the National Intelligence Survey (NIS) Program and submits the following report as an interim response.

2. In preparing this report the Coordination Staff held detailed discussions with representatives of the United States Intelligence Board (USIB) member agencies who presently have, as well as those who have had, responsibilities within the NIS Program. The survey of the NIS Program undertaken by the Defense Intelligence Agency within the Department of Defense, which is still under way, has been taken into consideration. In addition, questionnaires have been dispatched by the State Department to selected posts abroad soliciting views as to the usefulness of the NIS and other comments as to the value of the Program. Certain non-USIB governmental agencies were also queried to determine their views as to the utility of the Program in their work. All responses to these requests have not yet been received.

3. This interim report is therefore incomplete, and more detailed study must be made before comprehensive recommendations regarding the NIS in relation to other basic intelligence can be arrived at. The interim report only partially reflects consumer interest, primarily at the Washington level. A more thorough and broad survey of this field will be required in order that both the NIS Program and individually produced departmental basic intelligence can be evaluated.

4. Summary of Preliminary Findings

a. The NIS is a valid and highly essential program due, in large part, to the fact that it is an authoritative, coordinated, interdepartmental publication which is extensively used at both national and lower governmental levels. (Attach. A, Page 5, Para. 4.a.)

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b. The NIS Program has unquestionably stimulated and supported the collection and analysis of essential basic intelligence on most world areas. (Attach. A, Page 6, Para. 6.a.)

c. The NIS Program, however, has reached unmanageable proportions since there is not available in being or in prospect increased production capability required for timely revision and updating as well as for continued initial production of new NIS. (Attach. A, Page 3, Para. 2.b.)

d. A great amount of detailed and transitory material has been introduced into the NIS Program by agencies and individual analysts in an effort to use it as the vehicle for many forms of intelligence for many differing needs. The result has been delays in production scheduling in early coverage of new areas and in the maintenance of a reasonably stable, accurate and timely product. (Attach. A, Page 5, Para. 5.)

e. Among the other principal factors which have adversely affected NIS production are uncertainty as to the identity of the users of the NIS product, changed and expanded requirements, the turnover and shift of analytical personnel, problems of performing editorial and substantive review in a consistent and timely fashion, and the impact of crisis situations. (Attach. A, Page 6, Para. 6.a.)

f. The utility of the NIS Program is also affected adversely by the physical bulk of the individual NISs, classification, academic stylization, and problems relating to the assignment of priorities. (Attach. A, Page 5, Paras. 4.b, c, d.)

g. Deficiencies in the arrangements for, and conduct of, managerial responsibilities have also been factors leading to the Programs' present complexity. (Attach. A, Page 3, Para. 2. b.)

h. A revised NIS should be directed primarily toward meeting governmental needs for the basic intelligence required as a foundation for strategic and high-level operational planning and for the development of foreign policy. Its composition should reflect emphasis on well-rounded, up-to-date, basic and relatively static intelligence accompanied by only such detail as may be desirable to meet the needs of such users regarding the particular area covered by each NIS. (Attach. A, Page 4, Para. 3.b.)

1. If the NIS Program is redirected as indicated in paragraph h. above, while lower-level operational needs are met by reliance on other departmental or interdepartmental intelligence, the allocation and expenditure of the production effort for basic intelligence would be brought into better balance. (Attach. A, Page 4, Para. 3.b.)

5. Recommendations:

It is recommended that the United States Intelligence Board:

a. Approve revision of the NIS Program in accordance with the following broad principles:

(1) The NIS Program should be redesigned primarily toward meeting governmental needs for the basic-type intelligence required as a foundation for strategic and high-level operational planning and for the development of foreign policy. It should not also attempt, as at present, to meet the needs of lower-level planning and operational elements in the Armed Forces and Department of State and of all other Government agencies which require basic intelligence for the accomplishment of their missions.

(2) The NIS should contain only that essential, relatively static basic intelligence determined to be specifically required for each area covered.

(3) Reliance should be placed primarily upon other departmental and interdepartmental intelligence production to meet needs for more detailed and specialized types of basic intelligence, including those required for lower-level operational planning.

b. Note that, contingent upon USIB approval of a. above, the Coordination Staff, assisted by the Office of Basic Intelligence of CIA and the members of the NIS Committee, and in close consultation with interested departments and agencies, will develop specific measures intended to redirect the Program in consonance with the above-listed principles, and report to the Board thereon. Examples of the measures which would be considered are the following:

(1) Comprehensive revision of the NIS Standard Instruction Outlines to eliminate material of a transitory and perishable nature, and unnecessary details of little or no value to the primary users.

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(2) Elimination of the following specific (but not exclusive) elements from the Standard Instructions:

(a) Chapter VII (Scientific). It appears that coverage of this subject, over and above that in Section 17 of Chapter I, can be better accomplished on a more current basis by departmental or inter-departmental intelligence with respect to the Sino-Soviet Bloc; for other areas there appears little usefulness in Chapter VII coverage which, in any case, is presently limited to only 16 countries outside the Bloc.

(b) Chapter IX (Map and Chart Appraisal). A brief appraisal of mapping and charting would be made a part of the appropriate topical sections of other chapters (Chapters I-VIII of the NIS as currently organized).

(c) Key Personalities. Needs for biographic information would be met through the facilities and services of CIA and DIA.

(3) Establishment of a Chapter I (Brief) as the mandatory minimum coverage for any NIS area.

(4) Establishment of an authoritative central point to determine and specify, for each NIS area, any coverage over and above Chapter I which may be required, either in terms of additional chapters or segments of chapters or of modest expansion of sections within Chapter I.

(5) Establishment of means to ensure critical examination and determination of priorities for the production of NIS, bearing in mind existing coverage and the general availability of information on the particular area.

(6) Development of effective means for reducing the classification of NIS publications without impairing the validity of the product.

(7) Modification of responsibilities, procedures and format for the more flexible production of NIS, including the functions and responsibilities of the NIS Committee and OBI, as required to ensure coordinated implementation of the principles listed above.

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Assistant for Coordination

Attachments (4)

- A. Interim Review
- B. List of Personnel Interviewed
- C. List of State Department Posts Queried
- D. List of Non-USIB Government Agencies Queried

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